

# **President's Report for NVCAC**

## **November 8, 2021**

### **2020-21 AGM**

This has been an exciting year for the NVCAC with many ups and downs. Covid 19 continued to cause upheaval in our organization as we saw many people struggling with the pandemic as they dealt with issues surrounding themselves and their loved ones. Directors Lin Butler Buchanan and Ellen Miller both stepped down from their positions to deal with issues related to Covid. We thank them for their many contributions to our organization and wish them well.

The remaining directors really stepped up to the plate and we made the decision to hire Kathy Kanda as an Administrative Assistant to take some of the workload off of our hard working volunteers. This has proved to be a Godsend to our organization as Kathy got busy organizing online files, creating new productive ways of working with Google and created new emails for the organization using our Arts Centre domain.

Susan Parkinson stepped in as Program Director and very quickly got programs happening for kids and adults alike with her very efficient manner.

We continued to enjoy great working relationships with The City of Merritt, Merritt Literacy, Canadian Mental Health, Love to Dance Society and the TNRD as we continue with our slogan "Building Community through the Arts."

We continue to receive financial support from the BC Arts Council, The City of Merritt, The TNRD and we were also successful this year in receiving a small grant from the United Way and a Capacity Building grant from the BC Interior Foundation. We were also successful in receiving a Gaming Grant from the BC Lottery Foundation, thanks to help from Stephanie Moore who we had contracted to help us procure grants. Tim proved to be very valuable and we enjoyed a great working relationship with Stephanie who is now working with the City of Merritt and will continue to help us where possible.

A new program called "Creative Community Arts Crawl" was held for Christmas 2020 to encourage people to visit and explore downtown Merritt shops that sold or produced locally made items. It was held over a weekend with 10 businesses taking part. We gave participants a map at the Gallery and then they returned the maps with stamps from all businesses for prizes.

Another new program this year was in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Clubhouse here in Merritt. We titled the program Forging Connections and offered a 12 week Art program to the Clubhouse participants. This program saw 6 local artists share their talent in Painting, Pottery, Drawing, Drumming, Fused Glass, Poetry and culminated in an Art

Show during Canadian Mental Health Week in May. We plan to continue this program as we work to support the mental health struggles in our community.

For our Grant in Aid from the City, we wanted to try a program that was not dependent on the whims of Covid and decided to try a Bios and Promos program that would feature 5 musicians and 5 Artists from the Valley. This has proved to be a very exciting program that we hope to continue and you will see a compilation of that program tonight. Many thanks to Jano Howarth and Denise Kearney for their management of this program .

As an umbrella for the Arts in the Nicola Valley, we continue to support and offer assistance to the Community Choir, Nicola Valley Fibre Lovers, Merritt Ukulele Circle, Merritt Drum Connection, and the Brownies. We offer room to meet and assistance in promoting activities.

The NVCAC attended the Farmers Market, Chamber of Commerce Street Mall and The Lower Nicola mini Garlic Festival as an opportunity to engage with the community and promote our activities. The Bee Box program in partnership with Grimshire Apiary was a fun and colorful opportunity to engage with the community at the Farmers Market and a program I hope we can offer again with one of Merritt's many beekeepers.

This summer saw us host Miss World Tourism with Experience Nicola Valley. Samantha Sewell was a fun and engaging young woman who was wowed by our Gallery and Gift Shop, especially with the work of our 'Bunny Lady', Tracy Combes. This was a real opportunity to work with Greg Gerard of Experience Nicola Valley and garnered us some great publicity. I would like to suggest that our Communications team find ways to continue working with Greg.

One of the best decisions the NVCAC made this year after hiring Kathy Kanda as Administrative Assistant, was to also hire a summer student. After meeting with Shannon Dunn the Art teacher at the High School, we decided to hire Karianne Kroeker. Kari has been a breath of fresh air to our association and has been able to help us in many ways. We had hoped to have Kari lead a team in painting several murals in our Downtown Beautification project with the city but with the extreme heat dome, the wild fires and subsequent evacuations, we were not able to complete this project. Kari did paint a piano for the City that will be used in a City Parklet, has plans for several murals including the bridge in Lions Park and painted the artistic murals on the door in our Studio Space. Kari assisted with our children's programs, did an inventory of our art supplies, assisted Jano in the Gallery Shows and also worked a weekly shift in the Gallery/Gift Shop.

Our Directors and volunteers continue to work tirelessly for our organization and have really put the NVCAC on the map in the valley. I want to thank each and every one of them for their dedication to the Arts in the Nicola Valley.

Sincerely,  
Mischelle Pierce  
President of NVCAC